

**Reformed Church in America
And Christian Reformed Church in North America
Established Areas of Collaboration**

General Synod

In 2009, RCA general secretary Wesley Granberg-Michaelson addressed the CRC synod on the issue of being missional and Reformed. The next year, former CRC executive director Jerry Dykstra participated in an RCA consultation about defining classis boundaries. This year, the two synods have been coordinated to take place successively in the same location, allowing for shared resources, cost savings, and a historic joint session.

Ecumenical Partners

The CRC and the RCA are members together in a number of ecumenical and ecumenical-like organizations, both international and national (U.S. and Canada). The organizations in which both denominations hold membership are the World Communion of Reformed Churches, Christian Churches Together, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, and Sojourners.

Race Relations

The CRC's Office of Race Relations and the RCA's Office of Multiracial Initiatives and Social Justice collaborate. One example is the RCA's representation on the design team for the CRC's Dance of Racial Reconciliation curriculum used for racial reconciliation workshops in churches.

Disabilities Ministries

CRC Disability Concerns is well established and shared its expertise a few years ago when the RCA began a disabilities ministry. Together the offices produce a quarterly newsletter, *Breaking Barriers*, and provide resources for disability advocates in local congregations. The two offices hold joint conferences and events and link to each other's websites. The RCA's coordinator for Disability Concerns is a non-voting member of the CRC Disability Concerns Advisory Committee.

Child Safety Training

When the CRC director of Safe Church Ministry leads a child safety training session in West Michigan, she requests a list of RCA churches to include. When training is held in other communities, Christian Reformed churches are encouraged to include area RCA churches.

Leadership

Over the past several years, the RCA has emphasized the value of coaching for pastors, other church leaders, and churches engaging in the Natural Church Development (NCD) church health process. The RCA's coach training events have been opened to CRC participants, including an NCD training especially for CRC pastors in Classis Holland.

The Ridder Leadership Initiative, a program that focuses on the momentum and leadership needed for sustainable change, is sponsored by Journey at Western Theological Seminary, the RCA and the CRC. An initial group of CRC and RCA pastors and church leaders found the process so helpful that they extended the two-year program; a second group of churches has begun the process as well.

In 2005 the RCA and the CRC agreed to an orderly exchange of ordained ministers between the denominations. Further, the denominations exchange ministerial and church profiles to facilitate pastoral searches. The RCA's Ministerial Opportunity Listing includes openings at both RCA and CRC ministries. Trained specialized interim ministers are also available to churches in either denomination conducting a search for a pastor during a vacancy.

Congregational Revitalization and Leadership Development

The CRC and the RCA share a vision to develop coordinated, collaborative, and shared resources for resourcing leaders and revitalizing congregations in order to increase the missional impact of CRC and RCA congregations.

A number of components are in place or in development that indicate growing potential for collaborative CRC and RCA regional networks for revitalizing congregations and resourcing leaders. RCA regional synods and the emerging Regional Resource Networks of the CRC are positioned to take additional steps to coordinate, collaborate, and share resources for training, coaching, supporting, and revitalizing congregations and leaders across both denominations. Coaching is proving useful for general congregational leadership and is being integrated into small group and prayer leadership, cluster coaching, and church planting and development.

A new tool, Reveal, is assisting leaders in better understanding spiritual growth in their congregations. The new RevealWorks coaching modules assist in unpacking and applying the findings of Reveal in a local church. Both Reveal and RevealWorks have been developed by Willow Creek and are being adapted and piloted for use in RCA and CRC congregations. People in RCA and CRC churches are being identified and trained as guides to lead congregations from either denomination through a process of assessment, self-awareness, and revitalization using Reveal and RevealWorks.

Leadership Education

Western Theological Seminary and Calvin Theological Seminary are planning joint intercultural immersion leadership experiences for their January terms. The learning sites are located in areas around the world where RCA and CRC mission personnel serve.

Students at both seminaries occasionally participate in each other's chapel services, and the student senates host joint events. The faculties of both seminaries gather annually to engage in discussion and listen to a guest speaker. Both seminaries are also involved in an annual international discipleship training event.

Church Multiplication

Informally, the denominations have collaborated on church multiplication efforts for more than a decade, including shared participation in the Ecumenical Partners group and partnership in the Gallup assessment tool for church developers. (A similar tool is being created for church redevelopers.)

A 2007 joint church planting consultation led to greater collaboration. Training events developed by the RCA—including the planter “boot camp” called Thrive—are now open to CRC planters, and new joint training events have been developed. The church multiplication teams hold annual training sessions as well. The Christian Reformed Home Missions and the RCA Church Multiplication offices share best practices, statistics, and learnings from new churches. A few new churches have been started that identify themselves as both CRC and RCA.

This year the collaboration was awarded a significant grant from the Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation to expand church planting efforts, especially in four “kingdom enterprise zones”—Arizona, California, Florida, and West Michigan.

Urban Ministry

The RCA’s African American/Black Council and the CRC’s Black and Reformed Council are in discussions regarding their future working relationship and collaborations. In addition, the RCA and the CRC are already working together in several urban ministry efforts. Active churches include Nardin Park Reformed Church in Detroit, Michigan; Maple Avenue Ministries in Holland, Michigan; Faith Chapel Reformed Church in Paterson, New Jersey; Angel Community Church in Muskegon, Michigan; and City hope Ministries in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pastors Robert Morris, Denise Grier, Jeffrey Hough, Ray Timms, and Rik Stevenson have been involved in these collaborative ministries.

Centre for Public Dialogue

The RCA has a member on the Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue, a group that seeks to present a positive voice of faith in Canadian public life.

Mission, Relief, and Development Work

Reformed Church World Service (RCWS) has joined in the CRC’s relief and development work for a number of years. RCWS has contributed substantial funds to CRC disaster relief projects in the Dominion Republic, in Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake, and in Japan following the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami. RCWS and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) have also collaborated to collect emergency clean-up buckets that are distributed to affected people after disasters. CRWRC Disaster Response Services (DRS) and RCWS work together on the placement of volunteers for long-term rebuilding projects after domestic disasters. The RCA subsidizes the cost CRWRC incurs in hosting volunteers and CRWRC-DRS and RCWS have a signed memorandum of agreement regarding volunteer services of RCA members with CRWRC-DRS programs.

Missionaries Larry and Linda McAuley serve in Malawi and Mozambique, representing both CRWRC and RCA Global Mission. The McAuleys do community and organizational development work in partnership with Save Orphans Ministries, The Reformed Church in Mozambique, and the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.

Both denominations have partnered to support missionaries Marlin and Sally Vis in Israel/Palestine. The Vises recently left the mission field, and new missionaries are being sought to carry on their work.

Since 1990 the RCA has supported the CRC’s mission work in Cuba, initially by sending ministry teams from the Hispanic Ministries Council to Cuba to provide evangelism training, and more recently through a financial partnership that provides evangelistic resources to churches and pastors there.

The RCA partnered with the CRC on the Sea to Sea bike tour in 2008 and is involved in planning a potential Sea to Sea ride in 2013.

Ministry to the Armed Forces

CRC and RCA representatives have shared an installation service for army candidates going on active duty, and the denominations have held joint retreats for chaplains.

Herman Keizer, now retired as the CRC's director of chaplaincy, has acted as a mentor for RCA chaplain candidates at Western Theological Seminary, and he has worked with RCA chaplains in leadership positions.

Representatives of the CRC and RCA work together as part of the national Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, and with the office of the Service Chiefs of Chaplains the CRC and RCA host events and brief key people on issues of concern for both denominations. Both representatives participate in a Presbyterian and Reformed evening get-together at the army chief of chaplains Senior Leadership Conference. The CRC representative represents both denominations at the meetings of the Association of Religious Endorsing Bodies, soliciting input from the RCA before the conference and providing a report and minutes following the meeting.

Joint Publications and Distributions

Faith Alive Christian Resources is the distributor for printed resources for both the RCA and the CRC. Faith Alive is also a publishing partner with the RCA and is publishing the new hymnal that has been developed by the CRC and the RCA. Faith Alive and the RCA are also collaborating on a new Sunday school curriculum titled *Dwell*.

Back to God Ministries International and Words of hope are collaborating in Arabic media ministry, media ministry in several languages throughout northern India, Spotlight broadcasting, and the new Groundwork program that will replace both the historic Back to God Hour program and the Words of Hope program.

Children and Worship is a partnership between the RCA and the CRC involving shared trainers, training events, and joint decision making about resources and program direction.

The CRC and RCA collaborate on joint discipleship training events and small-group ministry. The RCA also works with the annual worship symposium put on by the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship.

Shared Translations

A set of confessions has been developed with identical language for both denominations. Both synods will discuss and vote on these documents this year.

The CRC and RCA have a shared goal for the future to translate Reformed material into various languages.